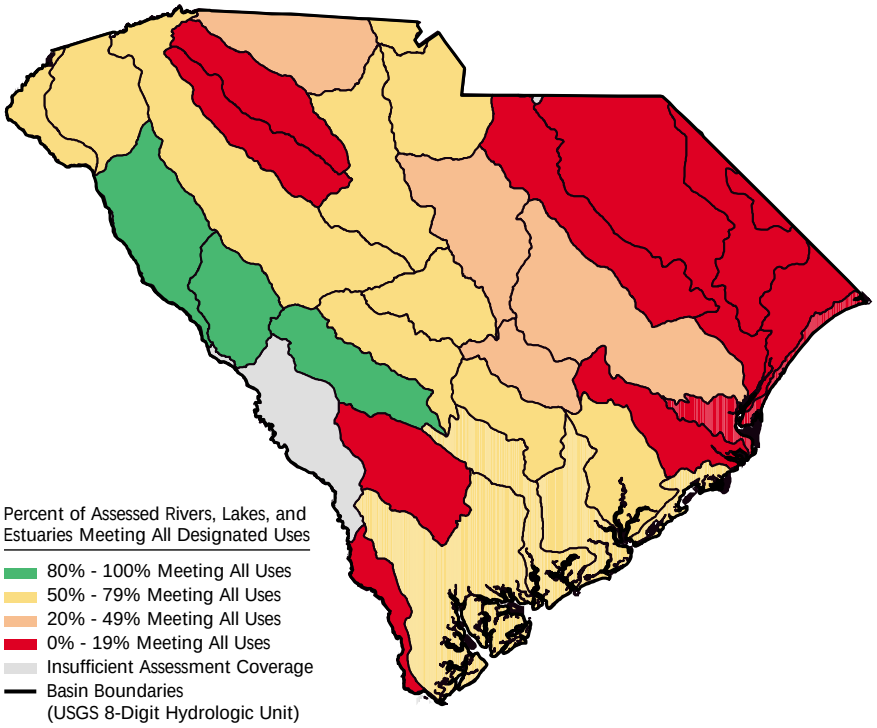
South Carolina



For a copy of the South Carolina 1998 305(b) report, contact:

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Surface Water Quality

Eighty-seven percent of surveyed rivers, 92% of surveyed lakes, and 68% of estuaries have good water quality that fully supports aquatic life uses. Fifty-three percent of rivers, more than 99% of lakes, and 89% of estuaries fully support swimming. Unsuitable water quality is responsible for shellfish harvesting prohibitions in only 2% of the state's coastal shellfish waters. Another 11% of shellfish waters are closed as a precaution due to potential pollution from nearby marinas or point source discharges.

Bacteria are the most frequent cause of impairment (i.e., partial or nonsupport of designated uses) in rivers and streams; metals are the most frequent cause of impairment in lakes, but only 9% of lakes do not fully support all uses; and low dissolved oxygen is the most frequent cause of impairment in estuaries. Toxic contaminants do not appear to be a widespread problem in South Carolina surface waters.

South Carolina did not report on the condition of wetlands.

Ground Water Quality

Overall ground water quality remains excellent, although the number of reported ground water contamination cases rose from 60 cases in 1980 to 3,350 cases in 1998. The increase in the number of contaminated sites is primarily due to expanded monitoring at underground storage tank sites. Leaking underground storage tanks are the most common source of contamination, impacting 2,650 sites. Other major sources include spills, landfills, hazardous waste sites, and land application of waste.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) initiated a Watershed Water Quality Management

Strategy (WWQMS) to integrate monitoring, assessment, problem identification and prioritization, water quality modeling, planning, permitting, and other management activities by river drainage basins. DHEC has delineated five major drainage basins encompassing 280 minor watersheds. Every year, DHEC develops or revises a management plan and implementation strategy for one basin. The majority of water quality activities in these watersheds are based on a 5-year rotation. The basin strategies will refocus water quality protection and restoration priorities for allocation of limited resources.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

Year round, DHEC samples chemical and physical parameters monthly at fixed primary stations located in or near high-use waters. DHEC samples secondary stations (near discharges and areas with a history of water quality problems) monthly from May through October for fewer parameters. Each year, DHEC adds new watershed stations within the specific basin under investigation. Watershed stations are sampled monthly for 1 year corresponding with the WWQMS schedule.

– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.
[a] A subset of South Carolina's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the state's 305(b) report for a full description of the state's uses.
[b] Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

Individual Use Support in South Carolina

Designated Use[a]		Percent				
		Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Fair (Partially Supporting)	Poor (Not Supporting)	Not Attainable
Rivers and Streams (Total Miles = 29,898)[b]						
	Total Miles Assessed: 19,524	87	-	4	9	-
	8,397	0	-	100	0	-
	19,428	53	-	21	26	-
Lakes (Total Acres = 366,576)						
	Total Acres Assessed: 211,462	92	-	2	5	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	211,462	100	-	<1	<1	-
Estuaries (Total Square Miles = 682)						
	Total Square Miles Assessed: 221	68	-	16	15	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	887	70	-	17	13	-
	221	89	-	5	6	-

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.